

**Access to Microfinance & Improved Implementation of Policy Reform  
(AMIR Program)**

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**Forum # 1**

**(YEA Private Public Forum)**

**Final Report**

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*This report was prepared by Dr. John Volpe, in collaboration with Chemonics International Inc., prime contractor to the U.S. Agency for International Development for the AMIR Program in Jordan.*

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### **Executive Summary**

This report contains information pertaining to CIPE contract # 9804014-208-02(A). More specifically, the information deals with the Young Entrepreneurs Association Public-Private Sector Forum held July 31, 2000, in Amman, Jordan.

The Forum provided YEA with an opportunity to present its views and its program of work on reforming Jordan's public school education system in order to improve worker skills and prepare the country's workforce for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The audience consisted of public and private sector representatives of government ministries, trade associations, private bodies, elected representatives, and others interested in various aspects of public school educational reform. YEA delivered a previously prepared position paper, and a government advocacy program to implement the findings of the position paper. Both the position paper and the government advocacy program were the subjects of previous CIPE contracts.

Forum attendees enthusiastically supported YEA's education initiatives. A number of public and private sector attendees described their own organization's initiatives that were either being contemplated, planned, or launched. On the basis of this positive response, YEA should continue with its original strategy of establishing an umbrella organization, whose members would be composed of private sector trade associations and other private bodies, to implement the programs discussed in the YEA position paper, and to undertake the government advocacy activities that support the position paper's goals and objectives.

**YEA Private-Public Forum to Improve  
The Educational System in Jordan**

July 31, 2000

**Agenda**

- |              |  |
|--------------|--|
| <b>10:25</b> | <b>Event Introduction</b><br>Mr. Sa'ed Karajah   |
| <b>10:30</b> | <b>Welcoming Remarks</b><br>Mr. Laith Al-Qasem<br>President, Young entrepreneurs Association   |
| <b>10:35</b> | <b>Process Overview of YEA Education Position Paper</b><br>Dr. John Volpe  |
| <b>10:45</b> | <b>Summary Presentation of Position Paper (Arabic)</b><br>Mr. Sa'ed Karajah  |
| <b>10:50</b> | <b>Presentation of Position Paper</b><br>Dr. John Volpe  |
| <b>11:10</b> | <b>Other Presentations</b><br>H.E. Dr. Khaled Toukan<br>Minister of Education<br><br>H.E. Dr. Fawaz Zu'bi<br>Minister of Post & Telecommunications<br><br>H.E. Ms. Subhieh Maani<br>Member of the Jordanian Senate   |
| <b>11:40</b> | <b>Presentations of Education Issues: Private Sector Issue Groups</b><br>Information Technology Association of Jordan, <a href="#">INT@J</a><br>Economic Opportunities for Jordanian Youth Programme, INJAZ<br>Takween Education and Drama for Early Education and Youth |
| <b>12:15</b> | <b>Coffee Break</b>  |
| <b>12:30</b> | <b>Continued Presentation of Issues</b>  |
| <b>1:50</b>  | <b>Conclusion and Wrap Up</b>  |
| <b>2:00</b>  | <b>Lunch</b>   |

### **Impact of the Forum on the YEA Position Paper**

The most striking development of the Public-Private Sector Forum was the enthusiastic support of Forum attendees for the YEA position paper initiatives.

The large number of public and private sector attendees reinforced all of YEA's goals and objectives contained in the position paper. Certainly private sector attendees, during the question and answer sessions following each presentation, and in private discussions, pledged their cooperation and involvement. Prepared remarks in support of aspects of the YEA initiative from the Information Technology Association of Jordan ([INT@J](mailto:INT@J)), INJAZ, and the Takween Education and Drama for Early Education and Youth were seconded by comments from representatives of various business groups and private organizations in attendance.

Particularly encouraging was the strong support forthcoming from government officials. Senator Subhieh Maani spoke of the need for private and public sector cooperation, particularly in the areas of teaching English and computer use to public school teachers, two of YEA's intended programs to upgrade worker skills. The general theme of her presentation was to encourage YEA in its endeavors, and to urge business community and public sector support for YEA's initiatives.

Senator Maani's general comments were echoed by the Minister of Post and Communications, Dr. Fawaz Zu'bi. Minister Zu'bi congratulated YEA for developing a program to improve human resource skills through public school education reforms, and called upon Forum attendees to join YEA as it works to accomplish its objectives.

Most heartening was the participation of Dr. Khaled Toukan, Minister of Education. The fact that Dr. Toukan arrived from Syria shortly after the Forum began and stayed and participated until the Forum and the luncheon following the general meeting were over is testament to his interest in the YEA initiative. During his prepared remarks, in the lengthy question and answer sessions that followed both his remarks and the presentations of other speakers, and again during the luncheon period, Dr. Toukan spoke of government reforms for education that were either just beginning or still in the planning stages that mirrored, to a large extent, YEA's initiatives. He stressed the need for the sustained involvement of the business community to assist the government in making its initiatives and those advocated by the YEA a success. Throughout the Forum, Dr. Toukan was most complementary of the YEA proposals, and pledged government cooperation wherever possible.

The Forum did uncover examples of initiatives of government, private bodies and the business community to upgrade worker skills through improvements in education that YEA had identified in its position paper. These will be discussed below. This was anticipated by YEA, and the YEA position paper and its advocacy program will require modification to take these initiatives by other public and private sector groups into account.

### **Modification of the YEA Position Paper**

YEA's position paper deals with the following issues:

- English language skills
- economic education
- school-based technology
- modifying school curricula
- upgrading school infrastructure, and
- improving vocational education (though this initiative is not as important in the YEA position paper as others listed above)

On the basis of developments emanating from the Forum, a number of initiatives to improve education in Jordan's public schools were identified by public and private sector participants. Some of the more substantial ones that were discussed during the Forum in one form or another are mentioned below.

#### **Initiatives of the Ministry of Education**

During the Forum, Education Minister Toukan mentioned a number of government initiatives that both directly and indirectly affect the YEA position paper. These include:

- teaching English language beginning with the first grade starting this September
- recruiting native English language speakers from the United Kingdom and Canada
- establishing two English language training facilities in Amman as soon as possible, and centers around the country when feasible
- developing CD ROM methods to teach the English language
- procuring a soft loan grant of \$25 million to acquire personal computers for the public school system
- establishing economic education courses as part of the regular curricula for all public school students
- equipping all public schools with computer laboratories

- introducing computer training for all public school students beginning with the third grade
- streamlining the bureaucracy involved in vocational education training
- improving the curricula for early childhood development
- expanding the number of public schools and improving the physical resources of existing ones
- developing multimedia instructional tools for teaching English in the public schools
- encouraging alternative income sources, such as consultancies, for teachers, because instituting differential pay scales is not possible at this time
- acquiring computers from private sector sources, and using new technology to upgrade existing “outmoded” computers in the schools
- using low cost loans and “pay-as-you-go schemes to allow public school teachers to own laptop computers for personal use
- decentralizing the public school system, and empowering local schools, holding them accountable for their actions

#### **Initiatives of Senator Maani**

- creating an education fund, with participation from both the public and private sectors, to teach English language and computers
- establishing a private sector MBA program

#### **Initiative of Mrs. Karajah**

- developing public and private sector support for expanded programs in early childhood development

#### **Initiative of INJAZ**

- requiring economic education to be taught as a regular academic subject in the public schools



Many of the initiatives mentioned above can be found in one form or another in the YEA position paper, and it would be a simple task to comb through the position paper and eliminate those initiatives that, we are told, are being undertaken by others in the private sector or by the government. However, this should be discouraged for the present, because the issue is much more complex than merely editing out initiatives others are said to be undertaking.

- It may turn out that some initiatives may just be getting started, and would benefit from the involvement of the private sector umbrella organization (discussed below).
- Other initiatives may only be in the planning stages, and would profit from umbrella organization involvement for the same reason.
- Still other initiatives may be government endeavors that require private sector financial support to succeed, or private sector government relations support to convince others in government to move ahead.
- Finally, some initiatives may be undertaken by private sector organizations that do not have the resources to complete their initiatives successfully, and would benefit, therefore, from involvement in the umbrella organization.

Rather than adjusting the position paper at this stage, therefore, it is recommend that the umbrella organization be formed and that several meetings be held before winnowing the list of initiatives found in the YEA position paper. To put it candidly, let's see what progress private sector organizations and the government ministries have made since the Forum, and what further progress is expected, before turning over some of the initiatives in the position papers to others. Once this information is known, the YEA position paper and the advocacy program that provides concrete actions to be taken to carry out YEA's initiatives can easily be amended.

### **Closing Comments on the Public-Private Sector Forum Exercise**

*How did the Forum and discussions with government and private sector organizational representatives affect the YEA position paper?* Support for the position paper was unanimous, in both the Forum dialogue and in discussions pre-and-post Forum. The purpose of the position paper was to identify YEA's goals and objectives in improving human resource skills through strengthening the public school education system. The purpose of the Forum was to elicit public and private sector support. Both purposes were achieved.

*How did the discussions at the Forum modify the YEA position paper and the advocacy program?* As mentioned above, Forum attendees pointed to some initiatives that were said to be already underway or at least being seriously contemplated by others. To the extent that the umbrella organization identifies initiatives being undertaken by others that have every prospect of being successful, YEA's policy paper and advocacy program can easily be modified to "write out" similar YEA initiatives, or to include those initiatives under the umbrella organization's program of work.

*Has the "issue" of education reform "moved?"* Yes, the issue moved between the time YEA's position paper was written and the Forum presentations. It has undoubtedly moved again since the Forum was held. These developments are to be expected – and welcomed, as signs not only that others recognize the importance of educational reform and are willing to contribute to making educational reform a reality, but also that YEA's early publicity on the issue has galvanized others in and outside government. Rather than looking upon this "movement" as discouraging, it should be considered encouraging in that it makes the task of the umbrella organization that much easier. In other words, the all-important need to convince government and private sector organizations of the efficacy of YEA's cause has largely been accomplished.

*How does the advent of new "players" on the scene affect YEA's strategy?* YEA's overall strategy should remain unchanged with the advent of government ministries and private sector bodies developing policies and programs for education reform, to wit:

- call a meeting of interested organizations;
- offer to take the leadership role in the organizing committee and in the formation and subsequent activities of the umbrella organization;
- include those promising programs of private sector bodies in the umbrella organization's program of work (or eliminate them from the YEA position paper and advocacy program if the private sector organization declines membership in the umbrella organization but appear on the road to successful implementation of its contribution to reforming education); and,
- work with government bodies to implement government programs.

YEA's strategy for *each specific initiative* (economic education, English language training for students and teachers, etc.) will require amending according to the findings of the umbrella organization.

### **Next Step: Creation of Organizing Committee/Umbrella Organization**

To ensure the success of the Young Entrepreneur Association's initiative to improve worker skills through changes in the Jordanian public school system, it is imperative that an umbrella organization, whose members band together to serve this common purpose, be established immediately. Far too much time has passed between the announcement of the YEA position paper, the Forum in which the components of the position paper were addressed, and the present.

This organization (for which a suitable, "catchy" public relations acronym should be found) should be composed of those trade associations and other private sector bodies (as examples, INJAZ, [INT@J](#), the Amman Chamber of Commerce, the Amman Chamber of Industry, the Business and Professional Women Club, and JABA) that have expressed an interest in taking a leadership role in one or more of the discrete tasks mentioned in the YEA report (for example, establishing a school to train public school teachers in the English language). Each member association should have an equal voice in the decisions of the organization.

An executive director should be hired. The role of the executive director will be to facilitate formation of the umbrella organization and to carry out the assignments emanating from the YEA's report and from progress among the umbrella organization's members in achieving various objectives contained in that report. The executive director should be paid by members of the umbrella organization according to a dues formula agreed to by an organizing committee (described below).

There are several other management options to implement the YEA initiatives that could be considered (including all volunteers or an outside management firm) but should be rejected. An all volunteer-run umbrella organization, for example, will not have the time, energy and attention to devote to a start-up organization, despite the best intentions of the volunteers. Management companies are expensive and require too much overseeing by the umbrella organization's members.

To retain ownership of its objective to improve human resource skills through changes in public school education, YEA's chairman should become the first chair of the umbrella organization. He should appoint an organizing committee to direct the umbrella organization's activities and to recruit new members. The organizing committee should be composed of leaders of other business associations and private sector bodies, and its members should be willing to commit time and funding. It should be representative of all factions of the private sector in Jordan, because broad-based support will be necessary to launch the umbrella organization and make it a success.

The organizing committee should draft by-laws to guide the umbrella organization and provide authorization for its existence. By-laws should include those elements that are important to the internal structure of the umbrella organization (as examples, membership requirements, dues structure, committee appointments, and voting power). While some may argue that by-laws are an unnecessary formality, I strongly recommend that they be developed in this case because they will add a degree of permanence to the umbrella organization and its activities. Put another way, the absence of by-laws may lead private sector bodies to regard the umbrella organization as temporary, and attendance and involvement may suffer as a result.

Serious consideration must be given to funding the umbrella organization, for unless the funding issue is fully resolved, the umbrella organization may well prove to be unsuccessful in achieving its goals and objectives. Funding formulas take several forms, (as examples, the number of members, size of budget, or sales volume). Alternative sources of funding must also be identified and sought, such as individual contributions, corporate support, and various forms of non-dues income.

The umbrella organization, once established and housed (I recommend an office within the YEA in order to monitor closely the activities of the umbrella organization), should meet monthly, and the organizing committee twice monthly, at least during the formative stages of building the umbrella organization and establishing its credibility. Thereafter, meeting arrangements can be reestablished according to need. The umbrella organization should immediately proceed to develop its membership and funding base, and carry out the program established by YEA and amended by recent developments on the part of the government and private organizations (as noted above). This means amending the timetable established as part of the YEA advocacy program.

Failure to establish an umbrella organization and to hire an executive director on a full-time basis to run it will make it difficult, if not impossible, to successfully and fully carry out YEA's program of work to improve human resource development in Jordan through reforms in public school education.

## ***VOLPE/YEA REPORT***

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this report is to describe the July 31, 2000, Young Entrepreneurs Association-sponsored public sector/private sector business and education seminar in terms of the discussion by seminar participants on YEA's proposed five education initiatives and on next steps. More specifically,

- *Did participants validate YEA's proposed initiatives?* The answer is an unqualified yes, and this view is supported by discussions with several YEA Board members, YEA staff, AMIR consultants, and by private discussions with a number of seminar attendees. There was no questioning of YEA's goals and objectives during the formal presentations, and the extensive question and answer period. The Minister of Education, Dr. Khaled Toukan, and the Minister of Post and Communications, Dr. Fawaz Zu'bi, were enthusiastic supporters of the YEA position paper, as was speaker and Senator Ms. Subhieh Maani. There was also strong media support for YEA initiatives in the form of an extensive *Jordan Times* article on the seminar and a long piece on Jordan television.
- *Have events and actions overtaken the position paper? If so, what are they, and in what way should they be accounted for in the position paper?* The discussion below identifies several initiatives (such as English language instruction being introduced in the first grade starting this autumn, the collection of surplus computers from the private sector and from universities, and plans to provide public school teachers with computers at affordable prices) taken by government over a recent period. These initiatives are in the YEA position paper. YEA should publicly applaud government for its efforts in these areas, adjust its position paper accordingly, and stand ready to assist government in these areas should the need arise. There has been movement from the private sector as well, most notably in the work of INJAZ and INTAG. The YEA position paper should be adjusted to take these initiatives into account, and every effort should be made to include the active participation of representatives from these organizations on the YEA-led task forces that will be established.
- *How will the actions underway by the government and the private sector affect the YEA position paper and the education advocacy plan/strategy adopted by YEA?* In several areas, as mentioned above, YEA's position paper and advocacy program will have to be modified to take into account government and private sector initiatives. However, these initiatives support YEA's educational goals and objectives. They underscore the importance YEA has placed on the reform of public school education as a key to improving critical workplace skills so that Jordan can become a competitor in the 21<sup>st</sup> century information-based world economy. And they should make it easier for YEA to recruit taskforce members from the private sector and to establish an on-going private sector/public sector dialogue on education.

- *In light of the successful seminar launching YEA's position paper, what strategy and action plans should YEA pursue in the coming months? YEA's strategy should not change. That strategy, as recorded in the advocacy program paper, is as follows:*

*To achieve the goal of developing a public school educational system that provides Jordanian students with the critical skills necessary to work in the projected information-based economy, and to compete successfully in the global marketplace, YEA will lead an advocacy program directed at the business community and the government. The advocacy program will encompass the following areas: English language skills, economic education, school-based technology, school curriculum modification, and school infrastructure improvements. A broad, business association Coalition will be established, with a Chairman selected from the group, and a full-time staff director chosen to facilitate a series of action plans.*

- Its action plans should be amended to account for public and private sector initiatives (discussed below) that are already underway. More specifically, YEA's Executive Director should:
  - Send letters thanking seminar attendees for their participation.
  - Follow up with attendees who indicated an interest in joining one or more task forces.
  - Call inaugural meetings of task forces.
  - Seek funding for a full-time Executive Director to facilitate the activities of the various task forces.
  - Follow the action plans developed in the May, 30, 2000 YEA report, with amendments to account for public and private sector activity already underway.

### **YEA's Proposed Initiatives**

What follows is a summary, initiative by initiative, of the comments made by seminar participants.

YEA intends to lead a business community initiative to work in partnership with government and the education community to implement (and further develop) a series of specific recommendations for restructuring Jordan's public school education system. The purpose of this exercise is to upgrade the critical employability skills required of the Jordanian workforce if Jordan is to compete successfully in the global economy of the 21<sup>st</sup> century information age. YEA believes that the present system of education can be improved in the following ways:

- Modify school curricula to enhance creativity, innovation and critical thinking.
- Enhance the abilities of schoolteachers through professional training in English language skills, computer-aided instructional methods, and creative ways to utilize new technologies in the classroom. And,
- Introduce English language training, economic education, computer instruction and Internet use, beginning with the first grade.

YEA developed its initiatives under five headings: English language skills, economic education, school-based technology, modifying school curricula, and upgrading school infrastructure. The comments of seminar participants under each of these headings follow.

### English Language Skills

- Senator Subhieh Maani proposed the establishment of a fund by civil society (voluntary organizations) and the private sector to provide financing for such projects as camps for teachers and students to improve English language usage. YEA's position paper calls for private sector funding of a number of initiatives to improve English language training.
- Minister Toukan reiterated the government's recently announced intention of introducing English language training in the public schools beginning with the first grade. This was a specific YEA action item that has now been overtaken by events, though YEA, in conjunction with the business community, should publicly support the government's decision.
- The Minister also discussed the government's intention to teach English using multimedia techniques (which dovetails with a specific YEA action item) and the need to import native English language speakers to teach in the public school system. The English Language Skills task force that will shortly be established should study this action item.

### Economic Education

- The presentation by the Executive Director of INJAZ fully supported the YEA's initiative to make economic education an integral part of the public school curriculum.
- Minister Toukan fully supported YEA initiative for economic education in the public school system.

### School-Based Technology

- Senator Subhieh Maani's proposed fund (see section on English Language Skills) also calls for funding to improve computer use by public school teachers. This proposal dovetails with YEA's own views on increasing computer usage in the school system.
- Minister Toukan discussed a government plan to utilize new software that will extend the life of older school computers. The purpose here is to teach computer literacy to schoolchildren without having to make a substantial investment in new computer hardware. The YEA position paper does not mention this initiative. He also announced a government plan to allow public school teachers to purchase computers on time and at affordable prices. YEA's position paper called for the distribution of computers to teachers free of charge.
- Minister Toukan also spoke of obtaining surplus computers from businesses, universities and banks, an initiative fully supported in the YEA position paper. He mentioned establishing centers in Amman for computer literacy that would be connected to governates, and of creating information technology directorates that would be connected to schools around the country. While not specifically mentioned in the YEA position paper, these initiatives could easily fit into the work plan of a business community task force devoted to school-based technology.

### Modifying School Curricula

- Minister Toukan favors changing the entire management infrastructure of Jordan's public school system. He specifically suggested: allowing schools to become profit centers by selling outputs and providing services to local communities; decentralizing decision-making to provide for more opportunity and more responsibility for local principals and other educators in the school system; and ending the dichotomy between the arts and the sciences curricula. YEA's position paper calls for decentralization. It is philosophically in tune with the notion of profit centers, and undoubtedly would support blending the arts and sciences curricula as part of its plans for modifying school curricula.
- Minister Toukan agreed with YEA's initiative to introduce career guidance counselors into the public school system on a larger scale than presently exists, and conceded, as YEA has argued, that the vocational education system is in need of substantial overhaul.



- Minister Toukan acknowledged YEA's proposal to differentiate teacher salaries to attract teachers in certain subjects, but noted that strong teacher unions would make this initiative impossible to achieve. Instead, he proposed allowing teachers to earn extra money through outside work. The YEA business community task force that will be established for modifying school-based curricula should study this issue to determine whether differential pay scales are possible despite the Minister's comments.
- Samar Karajah called for funding and for curricula reform to support a better understanding of early childhood development and the importance of movement teaching as part of the curriculum for young children. She noted Queen Rania's strong interest in this subject. YEA's proposal does not specifically address this issue, but could do so if the task force to be established on modifying school curricula considered it sufficiently important. The Minister of Education fully supported Mrs. Karajah's comments.

### Upgrading School Infrastructure

- Minister Toukan noted that infrastructure reform deserved high priority, citing as an example those schools that require students to be taught in shifts. He also singled out the need for facilities for disabled children and the importance of greater involvement of students in extracurricular activities (sports participation was his example). These concerns are also mentioned in the YEA position paper.

### Lemia Raei's Concluding Comments

Lemia Raei summarized the seminar with the following points:

- It is important for Jordan's future to develop an interactive partnership, first among private sector stakeholders, and then between the private and public sectors, to initiate and carry out strategic plans to reform Jordan's public school education system.
- Among the necessary preconditions for active learning is the development of cognitive learning skills among pre-schoolers. Public-private sector initiatives must take into account the needs of pre-school children, particularly through the introduction of appropriate educational technology.
- Educational reform must target all segments of society and all stakeholders in the education process (government, businesses, educators, families, and others).
- A consensus among stakeholders as to the economic future of Jordan must be established and supported by research.
- Jordan's public school system must introduce interactive educational methods and a multidisciplinary curricula that introduces knowledge in a practical and creative manner and creates a link with the environment of students.

***John Volpe***  
***Trip Report***  
***Contract # 9804014-208-02(A)***  
***Amman, Jordan, for the Young Entrepreneurs Association***  
***July 22 -- August 3, 2000***

Friday, July 28, 2000

**Arrival in Amman, Jordan**

Saturday, July 29, 2000

**I had an introductory Meeting at 9:00 am with Dr. Zaki Ayoubi, Se'ed Karajah (AMIR Consultant), and Lemia Raei (AMIR Consultant). The purpose of this meeting was to plan for the Young Entrepreneurs Association (YEA) private and public sector seminar on reforming Jordan's education system to improve human resource skills and prepare Jordan for the information age. We reviewed attendees by organization and position, and discussed speakers from government and the private sector. We discussed our objectives for the seminar and concluded the following:**

- Make the YEA position paper and advocacy program on reforming Jordan's education system known to stakeholders (businesses, government, educators, trade associations, and the general public). Of particular importance will be enlightening the Ministers of Education, and Post and Telecommunications as to YEA and business community views.
- Hear from the government Ministers and from private sector stakeholders. Do they support YEA's initiatives? Do they have initiatives of their own, and if so, do these coincide with those of the YEA?
- Amend the YEA position paper and advocacy program to account for conclusions reached at the seminar.
  - Develop and put in place an organizational structure will move forward on YEA's initiatives, and determine the best way for YEA to coordinate its efforts with key private and public sector players and stakeholders.

We noted that there would likely be two groups of associations attending the seminar: business associations, and issue-specialized groups, some of which are undoubtedly working on education issues YEA has already targeted. Issue-specialized groups will be asked to describe their work on education issues at the seminar, and to join a YEA umbrella group that will coordinate the work of all business associations and issue groups on education issues. We concluded that YEA's Board of Directors and staff should share the workload, through the formation of initiative task forces, in order to accomplish the goals and objectives contained in the position paper.

We discussed my role in the seminar, which will be to summarize both the rationale for the position paper and for the advocacy program, and the YEA's proposed specific education initiatives. At the end of the seminar, business associations, issue groups and government officials should be a good understanding of, and should solidly support, YEA's goals and objectives.

Saturday, July 29, 2000

I attended a 10:00 am meeting with Laith Al-Qasem, Chairman, YEA, Ghalia Alul, Executive Director, YEA, Dr. Ayoubi, Mr. Karajah, Ms. Raei, Ms. Samar Karajah, representing Takeen Education and Drama for Early Education and Youth, Ibrahim Osta of INJAZ, and several participants representing other private sector organizations. We reviewed and agreed upon an agenda that was essentially the same as the one discussed in the 9:00 am meeting. Generally speaking, the purpose of the meeting is to *go public* with YEA's initiatives, get *buy-in* from public and private sector stakeholders, and establish an organizational structure to handle YEA's education initiatives.

Saturday, July 29, 2000

Second meeting (1:00 pm) with YEA Executive Director, Ghalia Alul, Se'ed Karajah (AMIR Consultant), and Lemia Raei (AMIR Consultant) to fine-tune seminar agenda, prepare press release, and discuss possible scenarios resulting from the seminar. Spent considerable time discussing the implementation of specific action plans, staffing requirements, and additional funding to see the YEA initiatives through to conclusion.

Sunday, July 30, 2000

Early morning meeting (9:00 am) with Dr. Ayoubi. We discussed developments in education in Jordan that have taken place since my last visit, and focused on my opening presentation and the specific education action plans. We also discussed staffing requirements that must be met if the YEA's education initiative is to succeed, and possible sources of funding. The Minister of Education, based on recent meetings, is eager for private sector support for changes that he knows are necessary if Jordan is to upgrade critical human resource skills. One of our goals in conducting the seminar is to have the Minister publicly ratify YEA's proposals and seek private sector support as he implements some of his own ideas on reform. Finally, Dr. Ayoubi and I discussed the need to write a final report summarizing the seminar and next steps.

Sunday, July 30, 2000

Luncheon meeting with AMIR's consultants and YEA's Executive Director to finalize the July 21<sup>st</sup> seminar. Focused some attention on likely task force participants, possible new staff to run the YEA's education initiative, and sources of funding.

**Monday, July 31, 2000**

The Public-Private Forum (seminar) was held, with approximately 100 attendees representing the private and public sectors, the education community and the media. The seminar was very successful, judging by the comments from many attendees and from the significant media coverage of the event the following day.

Government presenters were H.E. Dr. Khaled Toukan, Minister of Education, and H.E. Dr. Fawaz Zu'bi, Minister of Post & Telecommunications. Senator H.E. Ms. Subheih Maani, Laith Al-Qasem, YEA President, Ra'ed Bilbassi of the Information Technology Association of Jordan ([INT@J](mailto:INT@J)), Ms. Samar Karajah, representing Takeen Education and Drama for Early Education and Youth, and a representative from INJAZ made formal presentations. AMIR consultant Sa'ed Karajah moderated the presentations, I summarized the YEA paper and responded to Q&A, and AMIR consultant Lemia Raei summarized the seminar discussions.

Ministers Toukan and Zu'bi strongly supported the YEA initiatives, as did the other presenters. The Ministers noted the lack of government resources to significantly improve education, and therefore his reliance upon private sector initiatives such as those proposed by YEA. Ms. Raei's meeting summary made the following points:

- It is imperative that there be a strong public/private sector partnership to initiative action to improve the education of Jordan's youth and thus raise the human resource skills of the Jordanian workforce. The private sector's contribution of time, energy, attention and expertise will improve the education system and lower the cost to government.
- The preconditions necessary to activate learning, such as preschool activities and the widespread use of educational technology, must be in place if reform of the educational system is to be successful.
- Educational reform must successfully target all segments of society and all stakeholders in the education process (students, teachers, parents, business and government).
- Stakeholders must achieve consensus on what Jordan's economic future should be, after which they must support policies and programs designed to attain that future.
- Educational reform will be more successful if it integrates interactive teaching methods and a multidisciplinary curriculum that introduces knowledge in a practical and creative form that responds to the environment of the students.
- A mechanism for linking private sector stakeholders and for creating an on-going dialogue with the public sector must be established.

**Tuesday, August 1, 2000**

Morning meeting with Richard Dreiman, Acting Chief of Party, AMIR Program, and Dr. Ayoubi. Dr. Ayoubi and I summarized the purpose of my trip, related to my previous three trips to Jordan, and summarized the results of the Public-Private Forum (seminar). While Mr. Dreiman was supportive of YEA's education initiative, he cautioned that we not stray from AMIR's mission. In other words, there is an appropriate role for YEA to play in supporting government efforts to reform the education system of Jordan, but that role must relate to improving job skills and allowing Jordan to compete in the 21<sup>st</sup> century's information age, not to simply improving education alone.

**Tuesday, August 1, 2000**

Late morning, early afternoon meeting at YEA with Laith Al-Qasem, R. Alul and several of the YEA staff, Sa'ed Karajah and Lemia Raei to discuss the results of the seminar and next steps. It was strongly agreed that the seminar was very successful in terms of introducing YEA's initiatives to a wider private sector audience, to the government, the education community and the general public. We discussed the formation of the umbrella committee and the staffing of that committee, and the need for my subsequent visits to ensure that the plan of action prepared for the umbrella committee during my last trip to Jordan is implemented.

**Wednesday, August 2, 2000**

I met with Dr. Ayoubi to review the reports required of my consultancy and to discuss next steps. I also spent the day in report preparation.

**Thursday, August 3, 2000**

Departure from Amman.

## ***VOLPE YEA PRESENTATION***

### **Introductory Remarks**

- The world has witnessed many remarkable developments over the past two decades that relate to the topic of our meeting today.
- In no particular order of importance, we note the growing trend toward “globalization” in product markets and factor markets. Companies are increasingly producing goods and services for the *world market*, and are taking advantage of physical resources, human capital skills and various comparative advantages from around the world to enable them to produce goods and services most efficiently.
- Economic liberalization has been occurring throughout the world – that is, governments everywhere are reducing regulation and bureaucratic red tape, allowing economies to operate more freely, encouraging privatization of formerly government-owned businesses and generally increasing incentives to work, save and invest. The rewards of these actions are dramatic increases in income and output per capita.
- Another trend of the past two decades has been the growth of economic interdependence, which we see in such things as the increase in the volume and value of world trade (much greater than that of world production), the continued growth of foreign direct investment, linkages with respect to monetary and financial relationships, and so on, all of which have occurred more as a result of private decisions of companies and individuals than be conscious government policies.
- And finally, we note the even more rapid rate of technological change in its many forms, and the rapid emergence of the new economy that is increasingly defined by information technology. The technological change we speak of increasingly defines the new economy.
- Jordan is no exception to these worldwide trends, nor can Jordan be insulated from these trends. Jordan has embarked on an economic liberalization program. It is seeking foreign direct investment and foreign technology. It is involved in privatizing government-owned businesses. It has become a member of the world trade Organization, is working on the successful conclusion of a Jordan-United States Free Trade Agreement, and I suspect it will look to replicate the Jordan-US Free Trade Agreement in terms of free trade agreements with other nations in the foreseeable future.
- So, like it or not, Jordan is a part of the world economy. As such, it will face stronger, more persistent and more intense foreign competition than ever before. With this in mind, the big question becomes: How can Jordan survive and prosper in this new, information-based world economy?

- Jordan Vision 2020 tells us that the forces driving the new world economy include a heavy reliance on new technology, especially that which is related to information and computerization. Success in the new world economy requires adapting quickly and in an innovative way to change. Those economies that will be most successful in the 21<sup>st</sup> century will be those that mobilize a skilled workforce, using the latest technology. Brains, not natural resources, define the new world economy.
- YEA believes that the private sector must play a critical role in ensuring that Jordan is prepared to compete in the new world economy. In that vein, it has prepared a position paper on what is necessary to accomplish to transform the Jordanian economy so that Jordan will become a successful world competitor.
- The position paper identifies a wide variety of initiatives that government, the private sector and the education community should undertake to enable Jordan to move from the economy it has today to an information-based economy in twenty years. The position paper uses education to improve human resource skills of the Jordanian workforce. The position paper includes initiatives dealing with:
  - English language skills
  - Economic education
  - School-based technology
  - Modifying school curricula
  - Upgrading school infrastructure
- The position paper benefited greatly from the ideas, comments and suggestions of many of you in the room today, both in terms of private conversations and meetings, and in the public forum on these initiatives that YEA conducted several months ago.
- The position paper is not a completed document. For one thing, YEA wants to hear the latest developments in the areas mentioned above that business and professional associations, the government, the educational and business communities, and other stakeholders are working on. These developments will be incorporated into a final document, as will the appropriate citations and references to the intellectual capital contained in the YEA document.
- Today, YEA wants to make its views on these initiatives known to all concerned. It wants to hear from the Minister of Education, the Minister of Post and Communications, and from others in the public and private sectors. Out of today's meeting, YEA will look to the immediate future with the aim of organizing the business community and developing formal ways of interacting with educators and government, in order to achieve concrete results on these education-based initiatives that are so important to the future of Jordan.

### **Specific YEA Initiatives**

#### **English Language Skills**

- English is the language of international business. It is widely taught in elementary and secondary schools throughout the world. It is used as a common means of communication in countries where different native languages are spoken (India and Singapore, for example). Multinational Corporations have adopted English as their official corporate language and English is the language of the Internet, so information gathering is heavily oriented toward English. And English is the most widely spoken language in the world. All this tells us that those who understand and can communicate in English have a decided comparative advantage in international commercial dealings.
- Jordan has announced a recent plan to introduce English language training in the public schools, beginning with the first grade. This is an initiative fully applauded by the business community. With this initiative should come new approaches to English language training, such as English immersion classes, English as a Second Language (ESL) teaching approaches, and computers, videos, plays and other innovative teaching devices.
- All of this takes time, money, political will and, perhaps most importantly, a significant increase in the number of teachers in Jordan's public schools. YEA wants the business community to concentrate on expanding English language skills in Jordan's public schools. In this regard, YEA plans to undertake the following actions:
  - Develop a government advocacy program to provide incentives to train English language teachers. These incentives would include, among others, such things as differential pay scales, tuition remission for English language training, and stipends to attend English language classes.
  - YEA will establish a school, supported by the business community, to train public school teachers in the English language using innovative teaching techniques (immersion, ESL, etc.).
  - YEA will adopt an advocacy program to convince the Ministry of Education to include English language training courses as part of teacher evaluation for pay raises and promotion, and to utilize the teaching methods of the private school training program mentioned above.



### **Economic Education**

- YEA believes that Jordan's school children will not function as effectively as they otherwise would in the work world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century without a thorough grounding in how the world works from an economic point of view. In other words, students need an educational program that teaches them about profits, productivity, international trade, international competitiveness (how to get it and how to hold it), the role of the price system, and other important economic concepts.
- In order for students to achieve this high level of understanding of the world's economic system and of their place in it, YEA believes economic education in Jordan's public school system must move from an optional, after-school, sparingly taught subject to one that is integrated into the school curriculum. In this regard, YEA has three initiatives to propose:
  - YEA will develop a formal working relationship with INJAZ, the Economic Opportunities Youth Program. More specifically, YEA will: provide classroom lectures on various economics topics in those schools already a part of the INJAZ program; YEA members will provide internships to INJAZ students; and YEA will initiate a government advocacy program calling for the adoption of the INJAZ program as part of the regular public school curriculum.
  - As support for the need to introduce economic education into the regular public school curriculum, YEA will commission a national poll to evaluate student and adult understanding of basic economic principles.
  - YEA will develop a series of free lectures to train teachers on basic economic concepts. These teachers can then integrate this learning into their academic and vocational classroom instruction.
  - YEA will review existing instructional material to recommend adoption in the schools of those materials that provide sound instruction, and to create and distribute new instructional materials where critical gaps exist.

### **School-Based Technology**

- YEA contends that it will be harder to survive and prosper in the world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century without an understanding and a mastery of technology in all its forms. Students must become technologically literate. They must become comfortable with technology and understand how technology can aid them in their studies today and in their chosen professions down the road.

- One way for students to become technologically literate is to promote and develop instructional uses of technology – school-based technology – from the earliest grades through university training. What is school-based technology? It is many things, but generally we think of school-based technology as computer hardware and software, Internet use, and distance learning. These tools are expensive. To justify the money spent on computer use in the schools, for example, government and educators must see how these tools fit into classroom instruction, and teachers must be trained in how to use them.
- Today, for example, Jordan has few computers in the public school system. Those that do exist are often outmoded, kept in labs and therefore not used in everyday classroom instruction, and not integrated with other computers inside and outside the school system. In other words, these computers, when used at all, function as typewriters.
- Putting more computers into the public schools is a worthy goal, and there are some efforts now underway to do just that. These efforts are well meaning, but frankly they put the cart before the horse. The belief that Jordan's public schools need 10,000 or 20,000 or some other number of computers should be the end result of a coherent plan. At the moment, we know that few Jordanian public schools are even adequately equipped with computers, that few teachers are computer literate (and the same can be said for students). Teachers generally don't understand how computers can be used as an instructional tool, there is little Internet connectivity, and so on.
- YEA believes that computers and other school-based technology will not solve all the problems facing education today in Jordan. But it does know that computers can be used to help students working alone or in teams to think and act creatively. They can improve basic skills and reinforce concepts already learned. In sum, they can reinvigorate education in Jordan. But for school-based technology must be readily available in the schools and teachers must use the technology frequently and effectively for such technology to reinvigorate Jordan's educational system.
- YEA has discussed eight steps it believes will improve teacher facility with computers and will integrate computers into classroom use. Please read about them in the policy paper. In terms of specific initiatives (and those dealing only with computer use), YEA proposes the following:

- Improve incentives for teachers to undergo computer training and computer use in the classrooms. How?
  - ◆ Under certain conditions, provide computers for the personal use of teachers. Using computers personally leads to greater understanding of their capabilities. YEA will develop and implement an advocacy strategy calling for public funding of this initiative.
  - ◆ YEA will ask business associations and others to donate surplus computers to the public schools.
  - ◆ YEA will work with the business community to establish free computer training centers in selected areas of Jordan. These centers will be free to Jordan's public school children.
  - ◆ YEA will develop a government advocacy program to encourage Arabic software use.

### **Modifying School Curricula**

- The fourth YEA initiative deals with modifying school curricula. What do we mean by this? Simply put, we're talking about the content, structure and processes of teaching and learning. We're talking about ways to enhance creativity, innovation and critical thinking.
- The traditional way to instruct students in the classroom is by rote learning, or "chalk and talk." The teacher transmits a certain amount of information to students who then repeat the same information back on tests. This system of instruction may have been sufficient in societies characterized by mass production techniques or in agricultural societies, where workers needed to master narrow tasks defined by central authorities.
- But this system is outmoded in the information age, where the state of the art changes quickly and workplace supervision is less important. Success in the information age, in other words, doesn't come as much from following orders well, but instead from:
  - Possessing concepts and theories appropriate to the problem being studied.
  - Working in teams to determine what should be done.
  - Possessing strong written and oral communications skills.
- In other words, moving from "what to learn" in a rote-centered educational system to a "how to learn" in an inquiry-centered educational system.

- There are other components to curricula reform – computer and Internet use, English language training, mathematics and science instruction, career guidance counselors, and so on, that you can read about in the YEA position paper. Decentralizing school decision-making, for example, is a worthy objective. But to get to the initiatives of modifying the public school curricula, YEA has the following proposed objectives:

- Establish and staff an education committee to monitor and comment on education in Jordan to the public. Actions taken by government, business and other groups will be reported to the public on a regular basis.
- Host a business community meeting with representatives from public schools, universities and community colleges, research institutes and others to strengthen the relationships between these stakeholders. Recommendations of this group's deliberations will be brought to the attention of government.
- Establishment of a public policy education “think tank” to study innovative approaches to reforming Jordan's public school system.
- Advocate the introduction of career guidance counselors for the public schools.
- Create a formal apprenticeship program for higher-level public school students who can then gain experience in agriculture, manufacturing and the service industries.

### **Upgrading School Infrastructure**

- We've discussed a number of YEA's proposed initiatives -- English language training, curricula reform, school-based technology, and economic education. None of these initiatives will be particularly successful without reforming the public school infrastructure. What do we mean by school infrastructure? Some of the items under this heading would include:

- Proper heating and sanitary conditions
- Smaller classrooms
- Modern buildings
- Community involvement
- Improvement of teacher skills with advancement and dismissal a function of teaching competence
- Higher teacher salaries
- Differentiated salaries to induce teachers into areas of critically short supply.

- YEA has two proposed initiatives in this area:
  - In conjunction with other business associations, it will conduct a public awareness campaign on the importance of infrastructure improvements to educating Jordan's public school students.
  - It will study existing laws and regulations pertaining to school infrastructure, and from the results of that study, create a government advocacy program with a view toward initiating, removing, and modifying them to improve school infrastructure.

### **Concluding Remarks**

YEA has proposed five ambitious goals, which will require the cooperation and full participation of the business community, educators, trade associations, government, and other stakeholders. Business community task forces on these five initiatives will soon be formed, and the work will begin to transform Jordan's education system to improve workforce skills. It will be a long and difficult road, but the YEA effort ultimately will be successful if all stakeholders participate.